

Methodist Episcopal Church  
North West Corner Fifth Street and D Street  
Jacksonville  
Jackson County  
Oregon

HABS No. ORE-104

HABS  
ORE,  
15-JACVI  
567

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20243

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. ORE-104

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
(METHODIST CHURCH)

Location: Northwest corner of Fifth and D Streets, Jacksonville,  
Jackson County, Oregon

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Methodist Church building, erected in 1854 by Rev. T. S. Royal, was the first church structure in Jacksonville. Prior to that time, religious services had been held wherever possible and convenient: Orange Jacobs, later a Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of Washington, reported that one service had been held in "a large building in the process of erection for a gambling-house on the opposite side of the street from the principle gambling saloon."<sup>1</sup> Although the Methodists did not acquire title to the church land until 1859--when James Clugage sold it to them for a nominal \$1.00<sup>2</sup>--they had already erected a building on the site. In November 1854, James McDonough and Thomas Pyle had filed a \$456 lien against the Methodist Church for labor and materials "furnished in the erection and enclosing of said Building."<sup>3</sup> In February of that year, Horace and Able Reed had sold Pyle a kiln of bricks, which may have been for the foundation of the church.<sup>4</sup>

The Methodist Church was shared for some twenty-five years by the congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Jacksonville as well as a number of other denominations--among them Baptist circuit riders.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the church occasionally served as a courthouse before the county erected its own building for that purpose. In 1856, Thomas Pyle was paid \$423.90 "for service as Sheriff, rent of the Church for holding District Court, Bailiff fees, etc."<sup>6</sup>

Like most of the early buildings in Jacksonville, the Methodist Church was insubstantially constructed. Frequent repairs were therefore necessary. In 1879, the Democratic Times reported that the roof, floors, and seats were being replaced;<sup>7</sup> the following year, the Times noted that Madame Holt had paid for repairs to the M. E. Church.<sup>8</sup> The most significant of the many alterations was the reorientation of the building to face on Fifth rather than Fourth Street; this evidently involved turning the building around.<sup>9</sup> As first constructed in 1854, the church lacked a tower and spire. The first spire, when added sometime between 1854-8, had a parapet with pinnacles at the corners of the base; the parapet with pinnacles was subsequently removed.<sup>10</sup> In 1888, a major restoration resulted in the alteration of the windows, the lowering of the ceiling, and the replastering of the interior walls.<sup>11</sup>

The congregation last held services in the building in 1928, at which time it disbanded--a casualty of the economic decline that began in Jacksonville in the 1880s.<sup>12</sup> The building is now owned by the Jacksonville Museum.

FOOTNOTES

1

Orange Jacobs, Memoirs (Seattle, Washington: Lowman and Hanford Company, 1908), p. 71.

2

Jackson County Deeds, July 16, 1859.

3

Ibid., November 1, 1854.

4

Ibid., February 13, 1854. The instrument is a bill of sale; only rarely were these recorded in the deed books of the county. Since the sale was for only one kiln of bricks, they were most likely to be used for a building foundation or some other such purpose.

5

Mrs. Frank Touvelle, "History of Old Jacksonville Church," MSS in Jacksonville Museum, Jacksonville, Oregon, and "Diary of Moses Allen Williams," October 27, 1881, MSS in Jacksonville Museum, Jacksonville, Oregon.

6

Jackson County Commissioners' Journals, December 2, 1856.

7

The Democratic Times, July 11, 1879.

8

Ibid., October 15, 1880.

9

This took place about 1883, so that the church would face the new Courthouse.

10

Photographs in the collection of the Jacksonville Museum, Jacksonville, Oregon, dating from 1854-58 show the more elaborate steeple.

11

The Democratic Times, June 29, 1888.

12

Mrs. Frank Touvelle, "History of Old Jacksonville Church."

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. Description of Exterior:

1. Number of stories: The entire building is one story.
2. Number of bays: The front facade is one bay; the sides are three bays.
3. Layout, shape: The building is rectangular.
4. Wall construction, finish, color: The walls are of frame construction sheathed with clapboards and painted white.
5. Openings: The facade has double wooden doors with an unmolded surround. The windows are two-over-two light double-hung sash, with segmental heads and vertical muntins. The openings are all very plain and simple; the present single-color painting scheme reinforces the simplicity of the building.
6. Roof:
  - a. Shape: The roof is gabled; the gable faces the street.
  - b. Cornice: The simple frieze and boxed cornice run along the eaves and are returned around the corner of the front and rear facades. The gables are defined by a raking frieze and cornice similar to that at the eaves.
  - c. Tower: The bell tower with spire sits astride the ridge, in the plane of the facade. The tower is square with louvered, segmentally arched openings in each face. A plain frieze and wide boxed cornice mark the base of the spire. The spire is a steep pyramid of square plan sheathed with alternating bands of chevron and scalloped shingles. The bands are painted alternately in yellow and red. There is a wind vane at the apex of the spire.

B. Description of Interior:

1. Plan: The space is a rectangular room with a raised platform at the west end.
2. Flooring: The floor is wide boards, unfinished.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: There is a wainscot of three-inch, vertical, beaded boards capped by a round molding. The plaster walls are rounded at the corners; roughly sawn boards split apart and nailed to the studs serve as lath

for the plaster. The ceiling is also plastered. A single square chamfered column provides interior support for the tower structure.

4. Openings: The door and window frames are plain board fascias. There are no interior partitions and thus no interior doorways.
5. Fixtures: A wooden pulpit of simple classical design stands on the raised platform. The plain wooden pews are not fastened down. The interior chimney on the north wall is supported on wooden brackets and has a flue for the pot-bellied, cast-iron stove that heats the interior.

C. Site and Surroundings:

The building sits on a large lot landscaped with shrubs and large trees. An old cast-iron gas street light stands at the southeast corner of the lot.

D. Original Appearance:

Originally, the Church stood on the west half of the lot, and faced west rather than east. It was built without a tower and spire; when added, the first spire had pinnacles on each corner at the base. After the building was turned around, a major remodelling took place: the windows were altered to their present form from earlier, square-headed twelve-over-twelve-light double-hung sash; the ceiling was lowered; and the interior was replastered and painted. In the late nineteenth century, the trim was painted a darker, contrasting color.

Prepared by Marion D. Ross  
Department of Art History  
University of Oregon

and Christopher Owens  
George Washington University  
1971

Edited by Ursula Theobald  
Writer-Editor  
Historic American Buildings  
Survey  
1976